



Helping the Disabled Impacted with HIV/AIDS



Photo: USAID/Tanzania

Participants in the DOLASED program.

“We think we are the first organization to create these HIV/AIDS materials in Braille.”

- Gidion Kaino Mandesi

While a young law student at the University of Dar es Salaam, Gidion Kaino Mandesi discovered that Tanzanian family law and government policy did not adequately protect the disabled. Mandesi, who is blind, recognized that the nearly 3.5 million Tanzanians with disabilities are especially vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS crises because the standard communications channels that inform and educate citizens in Tanzania simply do not reach them.

Mandesi established the advocacy group DOLASED to raise public awareness and advocate for the rights of the disabled in Tanzania. In 2002, DOLASED was among the first in Tanzania to receive funding through USAID's rapid funding HIV/AIDS program. With this funding, DOLASED developed materials in Braille which provide information on HIV testing, the proper use of condoms, virus transmission prevention, and how to take care of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Through workshops scheduled over a 12-month period, DOLASED's project will directly reach about 210 participants in three urban centers (Dar es Salaam, Bukoba and Tabora) and three rural areas (Sengerema, Mpwapwa, and Korogwe). Disabled peer educators who live in the community will be trained to convey correct messages about HIV prevention measures. The project will reach large communities represented by the associations for the disabled and many families taking care of the disabled.

First Person

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